

OEAP EG: Parent/Guardian Role

Those in a position of parental authority should be aware that in a school-based situation, where an outdoor learning activity takes place wholly in curriculum time (within the normal school day), then the school does not require parental consent. However, where such activities will take place beyond the school gate, it would be a reasonable expectation that parents are informed of such activities and this might be through a school prospectus, a newsletter or general information letter.

Parents should expect to be able to make an informed decision on whether their child should go on a visit and that the Visit Leader will provide full information. This information should be in writing and, for more complex activities (such as residential visits, overseas visits, visits involving adventurous activities and visits where there will be remote supervision) it is good practice for parents to be invited to a pre-visit briefing session where they can ask questions and ensure that they have a proper understanding of what they are consenting to. The information will not necessarily be provided in a single document. However, before the visit takes place, parents should feel assured that between written communication and briefing opportunities, they have details that include:

- Dates of visit.
- Visit aims, objectives and targeted learning outcomes.
- Times of departure and return.
- The location where young people will be collected and returned.
- Mode(s) of transport and name of any travel company facilitating the visit.
- Size of the group.
- Level of staff supervision and whether any remote supervision will be taking place.
- Accommodation details.
- Arrangements for dealing with young people who become ill.
- Arrangements for providing for special education and medical needs.
- Name of the designated Visit Leader and minimum number of accompanying staff.
- Full range of planned activities.
- Clothing and equipment requirements.
- Insurance arrangements.
- Pocket money.
- Costs.
- Emergency contact details.
- Policy regarding use of mobile phones by the young people.

Other reasonable expectations include:

- To be given information regarding any pre-visit preparation where they need to take an active role. This would include ensuring that their child has a proper understanding of behavioural expectations as set out in any Code of Conduct (where appropriate) which both young people and parents are required to sign. Both the young person and the parents need to have a clear understanding of the sanctions that might be imposed where required standards are not met.
- To be given clear information regarding the arrangements for sending a young person home early (when there has been serious failure to meet the required standards of behaviour), or collecting a young person before the end of a visit (when they have become ill) and how any costs will be met.
- To be asked to provide the Visit Leader with emergency contact numbers, which can provide 24/7 cover during the period of the visit.
- To sign a consent form requesting information about their child and which may become relevant to the way their child is managed by the Visit Leader, so that they and their assistant leaders are able to fulfil their responsibilities under their professional duty of care. This will include information that may be regarded as sensitive, but is nonetheless necessary. It may need to cover:
 - Physical, psychological and emotional health
 - Allergies
 - Phobias
 - Medication (including dosage and who may administer)

- Special dietary requirements
 - Details of recent illness and/or contact with contagious or infectious disease
 - Toileting difficulties
 - History of sleepwalking
 - Water confidence and swimming ability.
 - Religious requirements.
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- To sign a medical consent form, requiring parental authority for their child to receive emergency treatment, including administration of an anaesthetic or blood transfusion. Failure to sign such a consent should result in a child being excluded.
 - To sign specific consent to cover a situation where a young person might be transported in a private car (whether it belongs to an adult leader, or belongs to another young person).
 - To be able to establish indirect contact with their child in the event of a home emergency. This will probably be by an emergency contact phone number provided by the Visit Leader.
 - To be informed of a group's safe arrival. This will most commonly be by means of a "telephone tree" that disseminates the information through a pre-arranged "cascade", made known to parents before the visit.